

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 were pending in this application/prior to the amendments herein. Claims 1-4 are amended herein. Claims 5-17 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimers, and Claims 18-22 added. Claims 1-4 and 18-22 are therefore pending.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,600,747 by Yamakawa in view of U.S. Patent 6,435,728 by Shimoji. Applicants respectfully traverse the present rejection because the combination of Yamakawa with Shimoji, fails to teach or suggest all of the features of the amended claims

Claim 1

Claim 1 is amended herein to recite *inter alia* an optical fiber connection structure comprising two plugs, wherein said plug is provided with one or more ferrules, each ferrule of said plug is provided with a ferrule aligning member, said ferrule aligning member capable of sliding in a direction of the center axis of the optical fiber, wherein said ends of opposed ferrules brought face to face with each other are located inside said ferrule aligning member as a result of sliding the ferrule aligning member in the direction of the center axis of the optical fibers after the plugs are attached to the adapter.

Yamakawa does not teach a plug provided with a ferrule, wherein each ferrule is further provided with a **ferrule aligning member that is capable of sliding in a direction of the center axis of the optical fiber**. Yamakawa also does not teach ends of opposed ferrules brought face to face with each other are located inside said ferrule aligning member as a result of **sliding the ferrule aligning member** in the direction of the center axis of the optical fibers after the plugs are attached to the adapter (emphasis added).

Shimoji does not make up for the deficiencies of Yamakawa. For example, Shimoji does not disclose or remotely suggest ends of opposed ferrules brought face to face with each other are **located inside said ferrule aligning member as a result of sliding the ferrule aligning member** in the direction of the center axis of the optical fibers after the plugs are attached to the adapted (emphasis added).

In light of the above discussion, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim is patentable over Yamakawa in view of Shimoji.

Claim 4

Claim 4 recites the features discussed above. Yamakawa in view of Shimoji does not teach or even remotely disclose all the limitations recited in the amended Claim 4. For example, Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji does not disclose “[the] plug and the adapter have each a through-hole(s) for alignment, said through-hole being capable of being slidably inserted by a guide pin therein, and the plug is fixed to the adapter by inserting the guide pin through said through-hole of the adapter into said through-hole after the plug is attached to the adapter.”

Applicants respectfully submits that Claim 4 is patentable over Yamakawa in view of Shimoji.

Claims 18 and 19

Claims 18 and 19 recite the features described above. Applicants respectfully submit that Yamakawa in view of Shimoji does not disclose all the limitations of Claims 18 and 19. For example, Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji does not disclose “attaching a ferrule aligning member to the ferrule of at least one of the said two plugs, said ferrule aligning member being slidable;” and “sliding the ferrule aligning member in a direction of the center axis of the optical fiber so that the ends of the opposed ferrules are located inside said ferrule aligning member.” as recited in Claim 18.

For example, Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji does not disclose “attaching one of two plugs, into which an optical fiber is inserted, to another adapter provided with a ferrule aligning member, said ferrule aligning member being slidable in a direction perpendicular to the center axis of the optical fiber” and “sliding the ferrule aligning member in a direction of the center axis of the optical fiber so that the ends of opposed ferrules are located inside said ferrule aligning member.” as recited in Claim 19.

Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the above discussion, Claims 18 and 19 are patentable over Yamakawa in view of Shimoji.

Claim 21

Claim 21 recites the features described above. Applicants respectfully submit that Yamakawa in view of Shimoji does not disclose all the limitations of Claim 21. For example, Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji does not disclose “[a] plug having a

slidable member which is capable of sliding with respect to the two plugs in an axial direction of the optical fiber” wherein “the slidable member is a guide pin, and the two plugs and the adapter each have a through-hole(s) for alignment, wherein the guide pin is inserted in the through-hole of each plug” as recited by Claim 21.

Applicants respectfully submit that in view of the above discussion, Claim 21 is patentable over Yamakawa in view of Shimoji.

Claims 2-3, 20 and 22

Claims 2-3, 20 and 22 all ultimately depend from the independent claims discussed above. As such, these claims include all the features of the claims they depend from, and also recite unique combinations of additional features not taught or suggested by the cited references. As discussed above the independent claims are patentable over Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji. Therefore, Applicants submit that these dependent claims are also patentable over Yamakawa either alone or in combination with Shimoji. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections these dependent claims and allow them to issue.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims are allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and pass Claims 1-4 and 18-22 to issuance. Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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